

# Saturday Magazine.

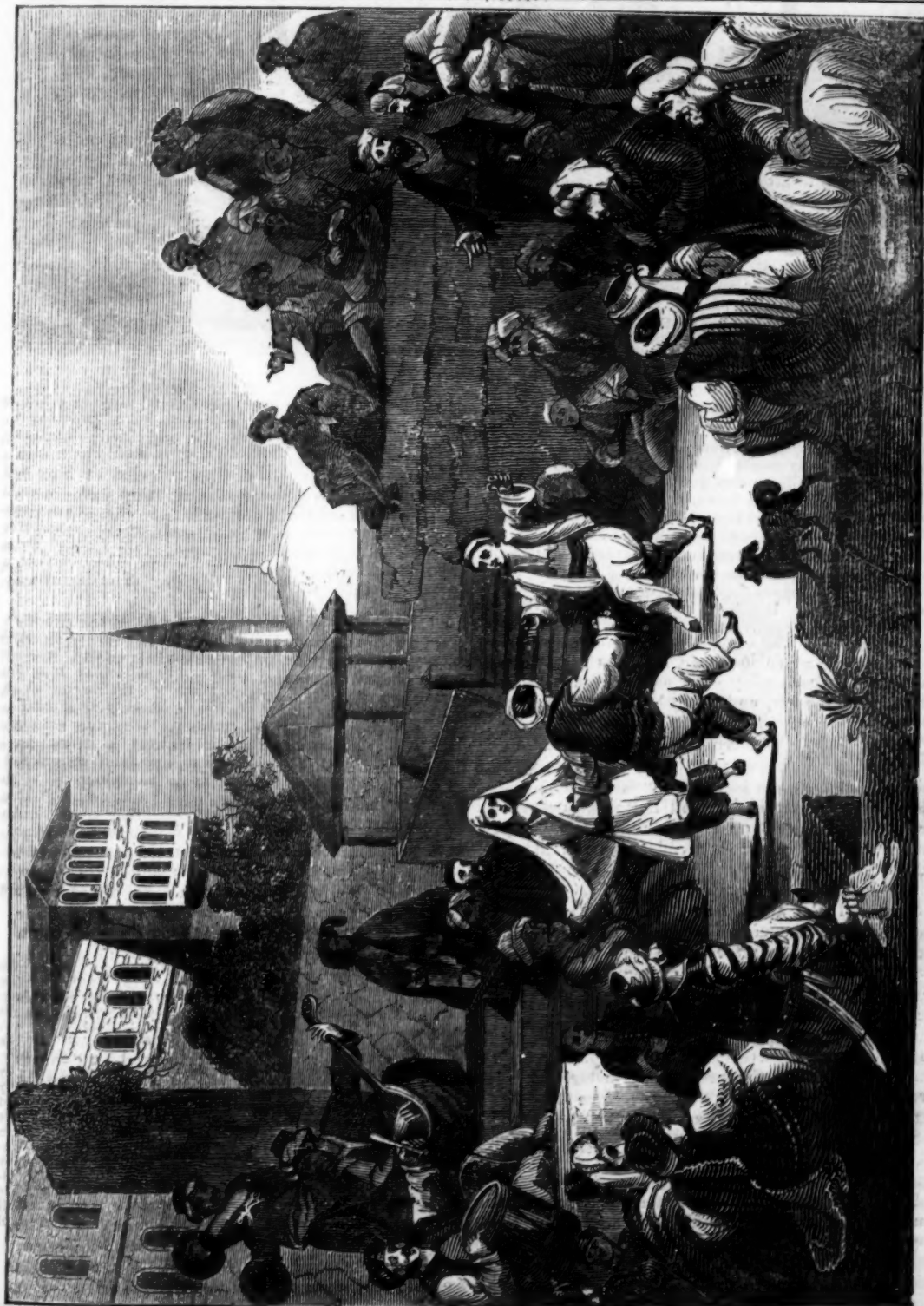
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MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE TURKS.—A TURKISH FESTIVAL.

## MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE TURKS.

## No. I. A TURKISH FESTIVAL.

THE indolence of the Turks is proverbial; with them the fondness for a sedentary life is stronger, perhaps, than with any other people of whom we read. It is difficult to describe the gravity and phlegmatic apathy which constitute the distinguishing features of their character: everything in their manners tends to foster in them, especially in the higher classes, an almost invincible love of ease, and luxurious leisure. The general rule which they seem to lay down for their guidance, is that of never taking the trouble themselves to do anything, which they can possibly get others to do for them; and the precision with which they observe it in some of the minutest trifles of domestic life is amusing. A Turkish gentleman who has once composed his body upon the corner of a sofa, appears to attach a certain notion of grandeur to the keeping of it there, until he rises for good; it would be only something of the gravest importance that could induce him to disturb his position. If he wishes to procure anything that is within a few steps of him, he summons his slaves by clapping his hands, (the Eastern mode of "*ringing the bell*,") and bids them bring it to him; his feelings of dignity would be hurt by getting up to reach it himself. Of course, this habit of inaction prevails equally with the female sex: a Turkish lady would not think of picking up a fallen handkerchief, so long as she had an attendant to do so for her.

The Turk who is fortunate enough—perhaps we should say unfortunate enough—to possess the means of living without labour, passes his existence in one continued round of listless idleness; his chief occupation is smoking a long pipe, or *chibouque*, as it is called, and this he pursues unceasingly for hours together, wrapped in happy unconsciousness. At times he stirs out of doors—most probably to pay a visit to some coffee-house, where he may resume his pipe, and drink a cup of coffee;—he walks with becoming dignity,—his look is grave, his pace slow, and his carriage haughty,—he looks neither to the right nor to the left, and scarcely deigns to bestow a glance upon any object which crosses his path. "Perhaps," says a modern traveller, "a Merry-Andrew, playing off his buffooneries, catches his eye,—he looks, but his spirit smiles not, neither do his lips,—his gravity is immovable, and he waddles onward like a porpoise cast on shore: it is evident that nature intended him not for a pedestrian animal, and that he looks with contempt on his locomotive organs." It is strange, however, that with these habits of life, the Turks are not at all deficient in bodily vigour, and in the capability of enduring fatigue; when called upon to undertake a long journey,—as for instance, on the occasion of being appointed to the government of some distant province, they will ride on horseback for hundreds of leagues without complaining of weariness.

The amusements of this people are adapted to their character, and are of a very limited nature. They have no public games or spectacles,—none of those means of diversion which are to be found amongst other nations; dramatic representations are quite unknown to them. Occasionally, indeed, the Sultan regales his subjects with the exhibition of the *Djerid*, or Turkish tournament, and some other entertainments in the open air; and large crowds of the people usually assemble to avail themselves of his bounty. Dr. Madden witnessed one of these displays, which was made in honour of the birth of an imperial infant; and he says that he never before beheld so

imposing a spectacle as was exhibited by the immense assemblage of people then collected. Upwards of sixty thousand persons of both sexes, in all the varieties of Eastern costume, were seated on the sloping sides of a natural amphitheatre; while above, sat the Sultan, magnificently apparelled, surrounded by his black and white slaves in glittering attire. Hundreds of horsemen galloped to and fro on the plain below, hurling the *djerid* (a short stick) at random; now assailing the nearest to them, now in pursuit of the disarmed. The dexterity of the combatants in avoiding these weapons, is very great; and had it not been so on the occasion spoken of by Dr. Madden, he says that many lives must have been lost, and as it was, he saw one horseman led off with his eye severely injured, and another crushed under a horse. These accidents, however, never interfered for a moment with the sports, which followed in the regular succession. After the *djerid*, came the wrestlers, naked to the waist, and smeared with oil. They prostrated themselves several times before the Sultan, performed a number of very clumsy feats, and then proceeded to exhibit their skill. Their address lay in seizing one another by the hips; and he who had the most strength, lifted his adversary off his legs, and then flinging him to the earth, fell with all his force upon him. Music relieved the tedium between the rounds, several of which occurred before any serious mischief was sustained. At last, one poor fellow was dreadfully maimed—for life indeed,—and was carried off the field with great applause. Bear-fighting was next attempted; but the animal produced was not in a fighting mood, and the dogs growled at him in vain. During all these pastimes, the slaves were running backwards and forwards from the multitude to the Sultan, carrying him innumerable petitions from the former, which he cannot refuse to receive, and seldom can find leisure to read. "The departure of the pacific bear," says our authority, "terminated these brutal sports, and every one, except the friends of the dead man, and the two wounded, appeared to go away delighted beyond measure. All the amusements of this people are of the same cruel character."

Their social recreations are few. "It is difficult," says a writer of the last century, "to give a just account of the manner in which Turks, men or women, spend their time when at home. Some of the former are undoubtedly studious, though most of them seem ever busied about money affairs, and their personal interest. When they are disposed to enjoy some relaxation or amusement among themselves, the diversions are story-telling, quaint jokes, chess, or draughts, and not unfrequently dancers and musicians, who play in the different parts of the town for employment." The Turk himself seldom takes an active share in anything but a game of draughts or chess; and then he never plays but for mere amusement. The practice of gaming is one which this people highly detest; in their eyes there is no being more odious than the gamester who plays for money,—he is worse than a common thief, and his crime is held as one which will be visited with the severest punishment hereafter.

The diversions of "story-telling, or quaint jokes," are not of a very intellectual description; the chief source of delight is a species of low ribaldry, and if none of the company is sufficiently facetious to entertain the rest with the required share, the task is left to some dependent Greek, Armenian, or Jew. The performer takes his place in the middle of the room, upon his knees, and there tells his story, or repeats his joke; while the grave Turk smokes his pipe in the corner of the sofa, and comes out now and then

with a smile or a dry laugh. It would be well, however, were their diversions on these occasions confined to the mere repeating of jokes; for it appears that they are sometimes accompanied with practical illustrations of the most barbarous kind. The same recent traveller whom we have quoted above, speaks of some which he saw played off at a Turkish feast, upon the person of a buffoon, who was well paid for suffering them. "It was," he says, "the poor fellow's trade, and he bore the marks of its dreadful nature upon his scarred visage."

The buffoon was sent out of the room, and during his absence a pipe was charged with gunpowder, over which a little tobacco was spread; he was then called in, and the pipe presented to him. Of course, he had scarcely lighted it, and given a single puff when the powder exploded, and drove the tube against the palate of his mouth, with great violence; the sight excited only a roar of merriment in those around. The next "amusement" was still more cruel. A plate was filled with flour, and in this were stuck twenty pieces of lighted candle. The buffoon and a companion of his, were made to kneel in the centre of the room opposite to each other; and with their teeth they laid hold of the edges of the plate. At a given signal, they were to blow the flour in each other's face, across the candles, and he who gave the quickest blast, would escape the volume of flame which the ignited particles of flour sent forth. The fellow who sustained the first injury, had the good fortune to escape unscorched; he completely singed the bald head of his companion, and burned the upper part of his face and brows severely. There was another shout of savage laughter while the unfortunate man was smearing oil over his features, to allay the pain. "I saw preparations," says the writer, "making for further feats of Turkish humour, but I was thoroughly disgusted, and gladly left the place."

The amusements of dancing and music are prohibited by the Mohammedan law;—at least to that effect is the interpretation placed by the learned doctors, upon the traditions of their prophet. There exist, however, troops of dancers and musicians in their large cities; but these appear in public only on extraordinary occasions, being chiefly employed in the houses of individuals when a grand entertainment is given. The dancers consist generally of Greeks from the islands; a Mussulman is seldom or never found in their ranks, the gravity of his disposition leading him in this instance to observe strictly the injunction of the law. It appears strange, unless we suppose the fact to arise from the absolute contempt in which the Greeks are held by their conquerors, "that the Turks born in the same climate, and mixed some centuries with them, have not yet adopted their mirth and jollity, but hear and see them continually dancing and singing without stirring a leg themselves, or joining in a chorus. Such of them as are used to the sea, of necessity mix amongst some hundreds of Greek mariners, who when they are on shore, or indeed, on board their ships, are rarely without music and dancing; yet a Turk is never found revelling with them. Nay, the men of high or even middling rank among them, seem to look on dancing as unbecoming the dignity of man, befitting only the meanest and most abandoned of their species! they think with the ancient Romans,—'No one dances unless he is drunk or mad.'"

When a rich Turk gives a feast to his friends on the important occasion of a birth, or a marriage in his family, the most acceptable entertainment which he can furnish, is the exhibition of a troop of dancers; their performances are not, indeed, distinguished for

elegance or grace, but they are suited to the taste of the spectators, and always command applause. In the city of Constantinople, the chief resort of the troops of dancers, musicians, jugglers, and buffoons, is the coffee-houses, especially those of the quarter called Galata: "You seldom fail," says Sir John Hobhouse, "of being saluted with music or some discordant sounds, in passing through the streets of that suburb. The wretched performers dance to the music of guitars, fiddles, and rebecks; and what with the exclamations of the master of the dances, and sometimes the quarrels of the Turks, so much noise and disturbance ensue at mid-day, as to bring the patrol to the spot."

Our engraving represents a scene in an entertainment, which was witnessed by the French traveller, M. Choiseul Gouffier; it was given by the Aga, or Turkish governor of Eski-Hissar, which occupies the site of the ancient town of Stratonice, in Asia Minor, or Natolia. On this occasion, the dancing was preceded by a recitation of verses.

#### THE BEETLE, AND THE HORSES OF THE PASHA;

A Fable, founded on an Arabic Proverb, directed against ridiculous pretensions;—"They came to shoe the Horses of the Pasha, and the Beetle stretched out her leg."

IN Egypt's superstitious clime,  
"It happened once upon a time,"  
A BEETLE, vainest of his kind,  
And, therefore, not a little blind,  
Presumed, so far as he could see,  
That nothing was so great as he.  
He was not of the winged sort,  
Or flying might have been his forte;  
But wheresoe'er his walk he took,  
He thought the ground beneath him shook,  
And when his perfect form they saw,  
His fellow-beetles gazed with awe.  
"Ah! those," said he, "were wiser days,  
When ancient Egypt, to her praise,  
Adored such attributes as mine,  
And bowed to beetles as divine\*!"

Scornful he spoke: beside him stood  
Four coal-black steeds, of gen'rous blood:  
Full of all strength and grace he saw,  
THE HORSES OF THE GRAND PASHA.  
Lo! pond'rous shoes, of iron proof,  
Were brought to arm each noble hoof;  
When, fancying they were meant for him,  
The Beetle raised his tiny limb,  
And held it forth, surprised and vex'd,  
His turn was not to come the next!  
And whilst the blacksmiths' hammers rung,  
These words were still upon his tongue;  
"Of course, I think it mighty odd,  
Good people, that I am not shod."

Arabian sages teach from hence,  
Th' absurdity of mere pretence,  
Which, stepping from its proper sphere,  
Unmoved by modesty or fear,  
Would rudely try to reach a niche  
Meant for the learned, great, or rich,  
And earn, by loss and ridicule,  
The bad promotion of a fool.  
So have I mark'd th' inferior mind,  
For plain, though useful, work design'd,  
With fretful emulation aim  
At points of consequence and fame;—  
Points that the waking dream reveals,  
A Coif, a Mitre, or the Seab.

\* See *Saturday Magazine*, Vol. VII., p. 68.

It is not so much the being exempt from faults, as the having overcome them, that is an advantage to us; it being with the follies of the mind, as with the weeds of a field, which, if destroyed and consumed upon the place where they grow, enrich and improve it more than if none had ever sprung there.—SWIFT.



## PHILIP MELANCTHON.



THAT great and good man who was undoubtedly the worthiest of all the Reformers.—BOSWELL'S *Life of Johnson*.

THERE is no truth which a religious and a reflecting people will more readily admit, than that of the unceasing providence of their Creator. Of this Scripture history is an illustration, and Scriptural biography an example. When the idolatry of Paganism had overspread the world, it was reduced by the mild influence of the Christian truth; and when Christianity had become corrupted, forgotten, or explained away, it was purified from the stains of time, and separated from the dross of tradition by the permitted efforts of the ministers of the Reformation. This evidence of design in the preservation and promotion of pure Religion is too apparent to escape attention; and it is with a hope of animating piety by the history of the past, that the life of Melancthon is now presented to our readers.

It is impossible to describe in this slight sketch, the state of religion in the sixteenth century. "Then," says Mosheim, "the public worship of the Deity was no more than a pompous round of external ceremonies, the greatest part of which were more adapted to dazzle the eyes than to touch the heart." The Bible was a forbidden book; opinions beyond those put forth by the church or councils were judged heretical, a crime generally punished by torture, or its more dreadful penalty, a lingering death. It was, however, mercifully ordained, that, in proportion to the greatness of the corruption, an impatient ardour for its repression should exist, and that the

qualities which distinguished Luther\* should be aided by Erasmus, Carolostadius, and Melancthon.

Philip Melancthon, "one of the wisest and greatest men of his age," was born at Bretten, in the Palatinate of the Rhine, on February the 16th, 1497. His family name was Schwartzerd, or Schwartz-erde, meaning, literally, *black earth*, but which, agreeably to the custom of the times, he changed to Melancthon, a compound Greek word of the same signification. His early education was intrusted to the care of his maternal grandfather, who placed him at a school in Bretten, where he soon evinced the vigour and extent of his capacities. From this school he was removed to the college at Pfortsheim, where he studied two years, acquiring the friendship of John Reuchlin, better known to the learned by the name of Capnio. His studies were continued at Heidelberg for about three years, when, in 1512, he removed to Tübingen, lecturing and applying himself to the continued study of the word of God. In 1513 he was made master of arts, and attracted the notice of Erasmus, who conceived the highest estimation of his abilities. At the request of Reuchlin he was nominated to the office of Greek professor at Wittenberg, where his learning, suavity, and ability, removed the prejudices that his youth was calculated to excite. It has been well observed, "that the history of piety is even more interesting than the history of genius." In the latter case, however elevated the object to which genius has been directed, or however great the difficulty that it has surmounted, we read and we admire, in proportion as we are interested in the success of the statesman, the warrior, or the poet. But to discriminate between the different states of the mind, to ascertain the progress of religious influence, to note the establishment of moral character, and to mark it in the fulness of matured power, devoted to the task of fixing the ordinances of God upon the hearts of men, is a theme more instructive from the reflection it awakens, and the example it details. It is in this light we must now view Melancthon, who, having acquired the friendship of Luther, and adopted his religious principles and feelings, accompanied him in his first disputation against Eckius, upon the sale of Indulgences.

But as there can be no real reformation in the human heart, no true knowledge in a nation, without religious instruction, he determined, by every method in his power, to speak and to explain the truths of the Gospel. For this purpose he gave public lectures on the Epistles of St. Paul: these were subsequently printed, with a preface and additions by Luther.

In 1527, he was appointed by the Elector to visit the churches in his dominions, to form schools, and organize a uniform system of instruction. The Reformation might now be considered as established; for though some principles were yet matters of dispute, yet so much attention had been excited, that Charles the Fifth, though long absent from Germany, and engaged in affairs that left him little leisure for theological controversy, was yet aware of the progress of the new opinions, the consequences of which he foresaw. He, therefore, at an interview with the Pope, insisted upon the convocation of a general council. To examine with accuracy, and to decide with equity in a matter of such importance, Luther was ordered to commit to writing the chief articles in dispute. This task was delegated to Melancthon, who, thereupon, drew up the articles of the famous "Confession of Augsburg." The style of this confession is elegant, grave, and simple, refuting

\* See *Saturday Magazine*, Vol. IV., p. 194.

opposition by the strength of its authority, and winning converts by the mild justice of its zeal. "Can you," asked the Duke of Bavaria, "overthrow this doctrine by the Holy Scripture?" "No," replied Eckius, "we cannot by the *Holy Scriptures*, but we may by the *Fathers*."

In religious as in political disputes, the flame of public opinion is seldom confined to the point from whence at first it rose, or limited by the power by which it has been fanned. Accordingly, the doctrines of Germany were now rapidly spreading in France, and Francis the First had assisted at a procession in 1535, where some persons alleged to be heretics were burnt. To mitigate his anger, Melancthon addressed to him a conciliatory memoir, and engaged to visit France, with a view to a pacific conference with the doctors of the Sorbonne. But the Elector of Saxony, who feared to offend Charles the Fifth, and the Catholics, who dreaded the possible influence of Melancthon over Francis, successfully frustrated his intention. No event of importance was now transacted without his consideration and consent; during the war arising from the LEAGUE OF SMALCALDE, he wandered over Germany, and finally fixed his residence at Weimar. He contributed to the erection of the University at Jena, assisted in 1541 at the conferences of Ratisbon, and was afterwards engaged in the temporary arrangement of the Emperor Charles, now known as the "Interim." After the death of Luther, in 1546, he was placed at the head of the reformers, a station at variance with the mildness of his nature, and his ardent desire of conciliation. He witnessed with pain the increase of schism in the church, with which his spirit was unable to contend. He was charged with apostasy by the primitive reformers, and with heresy by his Catholic opponents. To reconcile these parties he attended at seven conferences in 1548, and was appointed to attend the general council to be held in 1552; but age and toil had already exhausted him. He resided for some period at Nuremberg, but on his return to Wittenberg a sudden illness terminated his existence on the 19th of April, 1560. He was buried by his followers by the side of Luther.

The character of Melancthon, whether considered in a literary, a social, or a religious point of view, is one eminently instructive to mankind. The student will observe that genius, however vast, acquires fresh claims upon the gratitude of men, by habits of assiduous study and well-disciplined reflection. The man of the world will mark how effective both study and reflection are to the cultivation of all manly virtues, and the success of principles upon which all social happiness is based. And the moralist who seeks to spread the light of the Gospel, will learn how patience, meekness, and humility are in accordance with its spirit; how powerful they are in regulating human passion, and in winning and retaining hearers, not only by their conviction of the truth, but also by the moral example of its professor. "The cause of true Christianity," says Mosheim, "derived from the learning, genius, and peaceful nature of the MILD MELANCTHON, more signal advantages, and more effectual support, than it received from any of the other doctors of the age."

S. H.

If there are hypocrites in religion, there are also, strange as it may appear, hypocrites in impiety; men who make an ostentation of more irreligion than they possess. An ostentation of this nature, the most irrational in the records of human folly, seems to lie at the root of profane swearing. It is difficult to account for a practice which gratifies no passion, and promotes no interest, unless we ascribe it to a certain vanity of appearing superior to religious fear, which tempts men to make bold with their Maker.—ROBERT HALL.

# THE DATE PALM TREE, (*Phoenix dactylifera*.)



FRUIT AND FLOWERS OF THE DATE PALM

- Fig. 1. Flower of the Male Date-tree.  
2. The same expanded.  
3. Flower of the Female Date-tree.  
4. The same expanded.

This majestic tree is at times as much as sixty feet in height. Its stem is straight and cylindrical, and covered, particularly near its summit, with numerous prominences like thick scales, which formed the foot-stalks of the leaves of former years. For the first four or five years of its growth, its crest is not elevated above the ground; and during this period it consists of numerous leaves all springing from a common centre, resembling a large and thick bulb of a roundish or oval form, which is renewed every year, enlarged in size, and yielding annually an increasing number of leaves. When this button has attained the size of the future stem of the tree, it gradually rises from the earth, and the commencement of the trunk is seen, symmetrically formed by the remaining stems of the former leaves; it is by taking advantage of these sharp prominences that the cultivators are enabled to climb the slender trunk, for the purpose of gathering the dates. A grove of date-trees, when full grown, has the appearance of numerous elegant columns, each crowned with a verdant capital, with shafts beautifully wrought. The leaves on the summit, which are from ten to twelve feet in length, bend gracefully back, and form a kind of canopy. The leaf of the date-tree is compound; that is, formed of numerous smaller leaves, attached to one stem.

The date-trees are distinguished as male and female, one plant bearing the fruit, and another the blossoms; a mode of growth, of which we have an instance in the common hemp. The fruit of the date varies considerably, according to the mode in which it is cultivated, in form, size, and flavour. There are as many as twenty or five-and-twenty varieties, and in some kinds, which are very large and finely flavoured, the stone of the fruit is completely obliterated, in the same manner as the pips are wanting in the St. Michael oranges.

The date, which is a native of Asia and Africa, is found in moist sandy soils. It has been naturalized

in Spain, and some are found even in the south of France.

A forest of date-trees presents a very singular sight to an European traveller; in some parts of Barbary they are as much as two leagues in extent, and their verdant crests touching each other, produce the appearance of an immense natural temple, whose silence is only interrupted by the concert of numerous birds, the only inhabitants of these solitary places. Though the country is covered with masses of barren sand, the ground beneath the shelter of these grandees of the desert is covered with flowers of every hue, while the stems of the trees themselves are festooned with numerous beautiful climbing plants.

The Arabs sow the nuts at the commencement of the spring, but they more commonly propagate the plant by means of suckers, which must be frequently watered, and protected from the heat of the sun until they have struck; the last method of multiplying them is by far the readiest, and offers the advantages of selecting only female plants, as these alone bear the fruit, but it is necessary to place a few male plants here and there. Dates produced by cuttings, will bear fruit in five or six years, while those from the seed require fifteen or twenty years.

Each date-tree while in a healthy state can produce annually from ten to a dozen bunches, each weighing from twenty to five-and-twenty pounds. The best and most esteemed fruits have a firm texture, and are of a yellowish colour. These fruits, when fresh, have a delicious flavour and smell; they are sweet, wholesome, very nourishing, and require no preparation.

The Arabs make a very agreeable kind of syrup with fresh dates; they first remove the stones, and place the pulp in vessels full of holes; it is then subjected to pressure, and the expressed juice collected in vessels;—they call it date-honey. It is much in use in the preparation of rice, and the making of bread, the mass remaining after the syrup is extracted is still used as a commoner kind of food. Those who can afford it, preserve dates fresh throughout the year, in vessels filled with this syrup; a kind of wine is also made from the same substance, by adding water, and submitting the liquid afterwards to fermentation; a spirit is also distilled from it, which is much used in the preparation of perfumes.

Another preparation of this valuable fruit is of much greater importance. The fruit is exposed to the strongest heat of the sun, until it is sufficiently dry to be reduced to powder: if this flour is kept away from moisture, it will remain good for almost any length of time; it is stowed away in sacks, and the mere wetting of it with water renders it fit for use. This preparation is the chief support of the Arabs in their long journeys across the deserts.

The advantages of the cultivation of the date-tree are not confined to the fruit; almost every other part of this precious tree answers some useful purpose. A liquor is drawn from the trunk, called palm wine; the trunks of the old trees furnish a hard and durable wood, which is employed in the building of houses; the leaves, after being steeped in water, are sufficiently pliant to be formed into baskets, hats, &c. and the fibres of the stem of the leaves are made into cords and twine. Nor are the nuts or stones of the fruit without their use; in Egypt the inhabitants feed their cattle with them; in China they are burnt and employed in the manufacture of Indian-ink; and in Spain they make a charcoal of them, used as a tooth-powder, and sometimes sold as ivory-black.

The gathering of this valuable fruit is a task of considerable difficulty, for the trunk of the date-tree

is lofty, straight, very bulky, and without branches; it is also necessary to avoid the sharp-pointed and hard prominences with which it is covered. In order to reach the part of the tree where the fruit grows, a strong rope is provided, which the climber passes across his back and under his arm-pits, then approaching the tree he brings the two ends of the rope round the tree, and ties them together firmly in a knot; the rope is then placed on one of the notches or prominences caused by the foot-stalk of an old leaf, and the man slips that portion which is under his arm-pits more towards the middle of his back, so as to let the lower part of the shoulder-blades rest upon it, he then with his knees and hands firmly grasps the trunk, and raises himself a few inches higher; holding fast then by his knees and feet and one hand, he with the other slips the rope a little higher up the tree, letting it rest on another prominence. From great practice the climber is enabled to perform this with considerable quickness; when arrived among the leaves, he quickly plucks the fruit, which is caught below in a large cloth.

The trees represented in the engraving are in a cultivated state; when wild, their appearance more resembles the Wild Palm\*, in which many of the old leaves still remain attached to the trunk.

\* See *Saturday Magazine*, Vol. V., p. 146.

#### OYSTER BANKS.

AN observant and voracious person informed me, that of all the natural phenomena, on an extensive scale, which, during a visit to America, arrested his attention, and excited his admiration of the ways of Providence, was the formation of Oyster Banks on the sea-board of Georgia. The land from the sea, for about the space of from twelve to eighteen miles, is completely alluvial, and in general consists of uncultivated marsh lands, through which an iron rod might be thrust to the distance of eighteen or twenty feet.

A great number of large creeks and rivers are found meandering through these marshes, and owing to the sinuosities invariably resulting from running water, the bends of these rivers would, in a short time, cut away the adjoining land to such an extent as would make the whole sea-board a quagmire. But it is a remarkable fact, that wherever the tide bends its force, its effects are counteracted by walls of living oysters, which grow upon each other from the beds of the rivers to the very verge of the banks. These fish are often found in bunches among the long grass, growing upon the surface of the soil. They are in such abundance, that a vessel of a hundred tons might load herself in three times her own length. These banks are the favourite resort of fish and birds, as well as of the racoon, and some other animals, who feed upon the oysters both by day and night. Bunches of them, sufficient to fill a bushel, are found matted, as it were, together; and the neighbouring inhabitants and labourers will light a fire upon the marsh grass, roll a bunch of oysters upon it, and then eat them. This barrier of oysters, like rocks of coral, must offer the strongest resistance to the force of the tide.—JESSE.

WHEN Baxter had lost a thousand pounds, which he had laid up for the erection of a school, he used frequently to mention the misfortune as an incitement to be charitable while God gives the power of bestowing, and considered himself culpable in some degree, for having left a good action in the hands of chance, and suffered his benevolence to be defeated for want of diligence.



## THE USEFUL ARTS. No. IX.

## THE VINE.

THIS well-known plant has been an object of culture from the earliest ages, for the sake of the fermented liquor obtained from its fruit. Its history, like that of the *CEREALIA*\*, is inseparably connected with the early mythology of all those countries where it flourishes, and on the altars of which wine, like corn, constituted an habitual offering.

The vine flourishes best between the parallels of latitude of twenty and forty degrees; a little to the north of fifty it will only ripen its fruit in sheltered situations, with the benefit of full exposure to a southern sun; beyond fifty-five degrees it rarely produces fruit at all in the open air. It is equally impatient of a sultry heat, but so much depends on climate, and this is so entirely modified by situation, that while many spots beyond the mean of these limits are celebrated for their productive vineyards, others, which from their latitude might be expected to furnish the finest wine, do not admit of its cultivation for that purpose.

The wines of France are generally admitted to be the finest; the principal ones are Champagnes, Burgundies, and Clarets. Of each of these there are several varieties, celebrated for their peculiar flavours; as the light, sparkling, brisk, white wines of Epernay, Ai, and Sillery; the red wines of Verzenay, Mailly, St. Basle, &c., which belong to the first class. The principal wines of Burgundy are Chambertin, Clos Vougeot, and Romané Conti; these, though less generally known in England, rank among connoisseurs as the first of all wines. Clarets, or the wines produced in the neighbourhood of Bourdeaux, are divided and subdivided into classes and sections without number; Chateau Margaux, Lafitte, Haut Brion, are the best of the first class, or Medoc wines.

The restrictive commercial system of laws in this country in a great measure precludes the introduction of the wholesome wines of France, and has caused the principal supply of this luxury to be drawn from the hot and fiery vintages of Portugal and Spain; *Port* and *Sherry* being the *standard* wines at the tables of persons of moderate fortunes. Not above 1714 tuns of French wines have been imported into Britain annually within the last few years, while 14,300 tuns of Portuguese wine find their way during the same period.

Of the wines of other countries those of Madeira, and of the Cape of Good Hope, and the Rhenish, Hungarian, Sicilian, and Greek, are the principal. In the year 1830 the following quantities, in Imperial gallons, of these different wines were consumed in Britain:—Portuguese, 2,933,176; Spanish, 2,153,031; Cape, 537,188; French, 337,100; Sicilian, Greek, &c. 259,709; Madeira, 228,221; Canary, 105,875; Rhenish and German, 71,423.

The vine prefers a light and dry soil; if the substratum be chalk, the fruit will be better flavoured, but for abundance of grapes a deep and rich, as well as dry, soil is requisite. Most of the French vineyards are on a light loam, with limestone beneath, and the best both in that country and in Italy are those on volcanic districts.

The spot for planting a vineyard being selected and prepared, holes are made with a dibble, about a foot or eighteen inches deep, and a yard apart at the least, the rows being also at that distance asunder. The cuttings are from shoots of the preceding summer, or from those in which the albumen is fully formed; each shoot should be twelve or eighteen inches long, and should be taken so as to have a portion of the branch from which it grew still attached to it. These cuttings are planted in the holes any time from November to March, and are set deep enough to leave only two *eyes*, or knots, out of the ground. During the first year nothing is done but keeping the ground free from weeds by frequent hand-hoeing. In the ensuing March the shoots are cut down again to two eyes; the land is dug deeply, or else ploughed, and manured. The year's shoots are tied to short stakes, and after the vintage they are cut down to two buds from the original stem or stock. In France, therefore, a vineyard resembles a plantation of currant-bushes. When the old stems get unwieldy, *layers* are made, that is, shoots are bent down, and laid in a furrow made in the earth, and are covered over; the shoot is kept down by forked pegs of wood, or else by laying stones on them; roots grow out from the knots of the shoot thus buried, and when these are firmly established, the old shoot may be cut through, and a new plant is thus obtained.

Vines treated in this way begin to bear at the fifth year, and, with proper care and cultivation, will continue productive for three or four centuries. In the vineyard of Clos de Vougeot, the vines have been in bearing for 300 years, the plants being only layered to replace those that are become too large, or have been injured: the layers are not separated from the old stock. The soil of this celebrated spot is a calcareous gravel, about three feet deep, on a limestone rock, and it is said that manure is never required. The annual produce is from 160 to 200 hogsheads, of 260 bottles each, from a surface of 160 French acres.

In Italy the vines are allowed to follow their natural mode of growth, and are trained between poplar or other standard trees; but it is to be presumed that, since the French wines are most esteemed, and that nation has had most experience, their mode of cultivation is the best, or probably difference of climate may render different methods of cultivation necessary.

## GYMNASTICS.

THOSE whom choice or necessity may lead to follow some of the very useful occupations which are generally carried on in populous places, and which often bring many individuals together into large manufactories, would find a very great advantage in having recourse to some of those bodily exercises which are engaged in for the purpose of recreation and amusement. If judiciously managed, as to their kind, and the time and energy to be devoted to them, they might be made the most powerful means of counteracting the injurious effects arising from the disuse of particular muscles, and from the distorting and cramping positions to which the operatives in some kinds of business are unavoidably subjected. These exercises, besides greatly benefiting the body, might have a very important influence with respect to the mind and moral feelings. They would serve as a diversion from many corrupting and baneful modes of passing away the time not devoted to business, which too often lead the operative classes into practices which bring ruin on their families, and are more injurious to their health, and destructive of life, than the most unhealthful manufacturing occupations. Games of various kinds, requiring the active exertion of the body, combined with skill and agility, have, in almost all ages and countries, been resorted to, for the gratification both of those engaged in them, and of those who assemble for the purpose of witnessing the feats of strength and skill exhibited by those who have attained to excellence in these sports.

In the best days of the polished states of Greece, public games were kept up with great spirit, at stated intervals: and prizes were awarded to the conquerors, in bodily as well as in mental competition; and the distinction which the acquisition of one of these prizes conferred on the victor, was an object pursued with the greatest ardour and perseverance.

The preparation necessary for these games, required the habitual employment of these various exercises in the intervals. Suitable places, in or near the Grecian towns, were set apart for the young men to exercise themselves in; and persons were engaged as directors of the different sports; and so much attention was paid to the subject, as almost to give it the character of a science, under the name of Gymnastics. In our own times, this subject has been taken up with much spirit in Germany and France, and some attention has been paid to it in this country. It has, however, been chiefly attended to amongst the middle and wealthier classes of society; and many young men have found their bodily strength and agility wonderfully increased, besides having their mental and moral qualities greatly improved, under the regulation and exercises imposed by the superintendents

\* See former papers on the *USEFUL ARTS*.

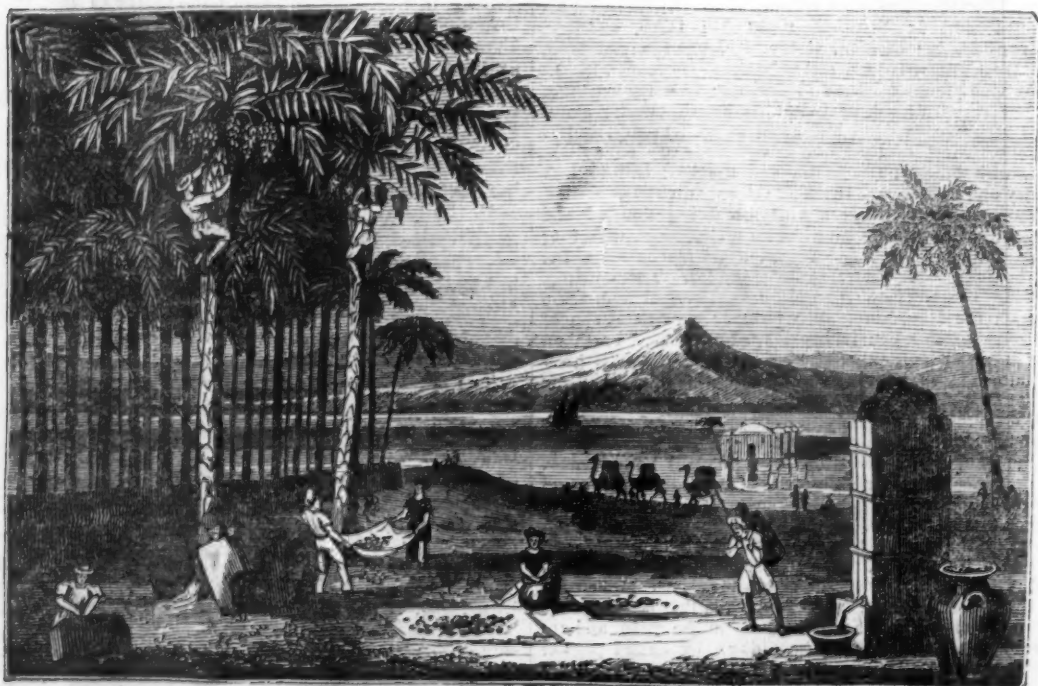
of these gymnastic recreations. It must not, however, be supposed, that these sports were made the subjects of compulsory education, which would effectually deprive them of their charm. The powers which they developed, and the emulation which they excited, rendered them very attractive, and they might easily and injuriously have withdrawn those engaged in them, from the more useful, but severer exercise, essential to the cultivation of the mind. The gymnasium was therefore made subservient to school-lessons, and other mental exercises; and the proper performance of these was made essential, as a means of obtaining admission to the gymnasium, or place of exercise. A similar care would doubtless be desirable, as a salutary restriction to the encroachments which athletic games might make on business or family duties, were they ever to become an object of general interest with our operatives. Various healthful exercises, such as cricket and fives, performed with a ball; running and leaping, tend to increase the useful powers of body and unbend the mind; but they may easily induce an excess of exertion, by which irreparable mischief may be done. Swimming-schools, in situations which admit of them, would give to many the means of saving either their own lives, or those of their fellow-creatures. It is a subject for great and increasing regret, that almost every open space in town or country, favourable to indulgence in these and other healthful exercises, are becoming progressively and rapidly occupied. It is in fact a crying evil, which drives boys and young lads to expose themselves, as well as passengers, to the most serious accidents, from their playing in the high-roads: and what is far worse, it drives our young men to seek amusement and recreation in the odious retreats of idle, corrupting, and dissolute association.

In recommending the athletic exercises which were esteemed and cultivated amongst the Greeks and Romans, I must not omit to notice the very impor-

tant exception which must be made with respect to those which are likely to stir up angry and ferocious dispositions, and can scarcely fail to have a hardening and brutalizing tendency. Such were boxing and wrestling amongst the Greeks, and in a still greater degree the murderous sword-fights of the gladiators in the Roman amphitheatres; and such are the barbarous prize-fights which disgrace this country. Their demoralizing effect is by no means confined to the parties actually engaged in these combats: in fact, some of these may give proof of admirable courage, agility, and perseverance, which we must regret to see prostituted to so base a purpose. Perhaps, in many instances, the greatest evil is the effect produced upon the spectators; for there can be no doubt, that the habit of witnessing these spectacles blunts that natural sensibility which must make every uncorrupted mind feel pain at witnessing the distress and suffering of others, even whilst he may admire the prowess and fortitude which accompany them. When this sensibility is destroyed, it is soon succeeded by the opposite state. Pleasure is felt in witnessing these sufferings, and the desire to indulge in this gratification grows to a detestable passion; and not only their fellow-creatures, but numbers of helpless animals, destined for the use of man, and placed under his protection, are barbarously sacrificed to satiate it. In short, they are become cruel in the extreme, and cruelty is the associate, the twin-brother of the basest cowardice, and utterly repugnant to genuine courage and valour.

[HODGKIN on the Means of Preserving Health.]

SILENCE does not always mark wisdom. I was at dinner some time ago, in company with a man who listened to me and said nothing for a long time; but he nodded his head, and I thought him intelligent. At length, towards the end of the dinner, some apple-dumplings were placed on the table, and my man had no sooner seen them, than he burst forth with "Them's the jockies for me!"—COLERIDGE.



CULTIVATION OF THE DATE PALM.